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A LETTER CONCERNING TOLERATION.

By JOHN LOCKE, Esq.

A NEW EDITION, WITH ALTERATIONS.

YORK:
PRINTED BY WILSON, SPENCE, AND MAWMAN;
FOR T. WILSON AND R. SPENCE, High-Ousegate;
Anno 1788.

BRITISH MUSEUM

PREFACE

TO THE

FIRST ENGLISH EDITION.

THE enſuing Letter concerning TOLERATION, firſt printed in Latin this very year in Holland, has already been tranſlated both into Dutch and French. So general and ſpeedy an approbation may therefore beſpeak its favourable reception into England. I think, indeed, there is no nation under heaven, in which ſo much has already been ſaid upon that ſubject, as ours: but yet cer-

tainly there is no people that ſtand in more need of having ſomething further both ſaid and done amongſt them, in this point, than we do.

Our government has not only been partial in matters of religion; but thoſe alſo who have ſuffered under that partiality, and have therefore endeavoured by their writings to vindicate their own rights and liberties, have, for the moſt part, done it upon narrow principles, ſuited only to the intereſts of their own ſects.

This narrowneſs of ſpirit, on all ſides, has undoubtedly been the principal occaſion of our miſeries and confuſions. But whatever have been

the occaſion, it is now high time to ſeek for a thorough cure. We have need of more generous remedies than what have yet been made uſe of in our diſtemper. It is neither declarations of indulgence, nor acts of comprehenſion, ſuch as have yet been practiſed or projected amongſt us, that can do the work. The firſt will but palliate, the ſecond increaſe our evil.

Abſolute liberty, juſt and true liberty, equal and impartial liberty, is the thing that we ſtand in need of. Now, though this has indeed been much talked of, I doubt it has not been much underſtood; I am ſure not at all practiſed, either by our governors towards the people in

general, or by any diſſenting parties of the people towards one another.

I cannot therefore but hope, that this diſcourſe, which treats of that ſubject, however briefly, yet more exactly than any we have yet ſeen, demonſtrating both the equitableneſs and practicableneſs of the thing, will be eſteemed highly ſeaſonable by all men that have ſouls large enough to prefer the true intereſt of the public before that of a party.

It is for the uſe of ſuch as are already ſo ſpirited, or to inſpire that ſpirit into thoſe that are not, that I have tranſlated it into our language. But the thing itſelf is ſo ſhort, that it will not bear a longer preface. I

leave it therefore to the conſideration of my countrymen, and heartily wiſh that they may make the uſe of it that it appears to be deſigned for.

leave it therefore to the consideration of my countrymen, and heartily wish that they may make the use of it that it appears to be designed for.

A

LETTER

CONCERNING

TOLERATION.

HONOURED SIR,

SINCE you are pleaſed to enquire, what are my thoughts about the mutual toleration of Chriſtians in their different profeſſions of religion, I muſt needs anſwer you freely, that I eſteem that toleration to be the chief characteriſtical mark of the true

church. For whatſoever ſome people boaſt of the antiquity of places and names, or of the pomp of their outward worſhip; others, of the reformation of their diſcipline; all, of the orthodoxy of their faith (for every one is orthodox to himſelf): theſe things, and all others of this nature, are much rather marks of men ſtriving for power and empire over one another, than of the church of Chriſt. Let any one have never ſo true a claim to all theſe things, yet if he be deſtitute of charity, meekneſs, and good-will in general towards all mankind, even to thoſe that are not Chriſtians, he

is certainly yet ſhort of being a true Chriſtian himſelf. 'The 'kings of the Gentiles exerciſe 'lordſhip over them,' ſaid our Saviour to his diſciples, 'but ye 'ſhall not be ſo,' *Luke* xxii. 25. The buſineſs of true religion is quite another thing. It is not inſtituted in order to the erecting of an external pomp, nor to the obtaining of eccleſiaſtical dominion, nor to the exerciſing of compulſive force, but to the regulating of mens lives according to the rules of virtue and piety. Whoſoever will liſt himſelf under the banner of Chriſt, muſt, in the firſt place, and above all things, make war upon

his own luſts and vices. It is in vain for any man to uſurp the name of Chriſtian, without holineſs of life, purity of manners, and benignity and meekneſs of ſpirit.

'Thou, when thou art converted, ſtrengthen thy brethren' (*Luke* xxii. 2.), ſaid our Lord to Peter. It would indeed be very hard for one that appears careleſs about his own ſalvation, to perſuade me that he were extremely concerned for mine: for it is impoſſible that thoſe ſhould ſincerely and heartily apply themſelves to make other people Chriſtians, who have not

really embraced the Chriſtian religion in their own hearts. If the goſpel and the apoſtles may be credited, no man can be a Chriſtian without charity, and without that faith which works, not by force, but by love. Now, I appeal to the conſciences of thoſe that perſecute, torment, deſtroy, and kill other men upon pretence of religion, whether they do it out of friendſhip or kindneſs towards them, or no; and I ſhall then indeed, and not till then, believe they do ſo, when I ſhall ſee thoſe fiery zealots correcting, in the ſame manner, their friends and familiar acquaintances, for the

manifeſt ſins they commit againſt the precepts of the goſpel; when I ſhall ſee them proſecute with fire and ſword the members of their own communion that are tainted with enormous vices, and, without amendment, are in danger of eternal perdition; and when I ſhall ſee them thus expreſs their love and deſire of the ſalvation of their ſouls, by the infliction of torments, and exerciſe of all manner of cruelties; for if it be out of a principle of charity, as they pretend, and love to mens ſouls, that they deprive them of their eſtates, maim them with corporal puniſhments, ſtarve and

torment them in noiſome priſons, and in the end even take away their lives; I ſay, if all this be done merely to make men Chriſtians, and procure their ſalvation, why then do they ſuffer 'whore-'dom, fraud, and ſuch like enor-'mities,' *Rom.* i. (which, according to the apoſtle, manifeſtly reliſh of heatheniſh corruption) to predominate ſo much and abound amongſt their flocks and people? theſe, and ſuch like things, are certainly more contrary to the glory of God, to the purity of the church, and to the ſalvation of ſouls, than any conſcientious diſſent from eccleſiaſtical deciſions, or ſeparation from

public worſhip, whilſt accompanied with innocency of life. Why, then, does this burning zeal for God, for the church, and for the ſalvation of ſouls, burning, I ſay, literally, with fire and faggot, paſs by thoſe moral vices and wickedneſſes, without any chaſtiſement, which are acknowleged by all men to be diametrically oppoſite to the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and to bend all its nerves either to the introducing of ceremonies, or to the eſtabliſhment of opinions; which, for the moſt part, are about nice and intricate matters, that exceed the capacity of ordinary underſtandings? Which

of the parties contending about theſe things is in the right, which of them is guilty of ſchiſm or hereſy, whether thoſe that domineer, or thoſe that ſuffer, will then at laſt be manifeſt, when the cauſe of their ſeparation comes to be judged of. He certainly that follows Chriſt, embraces his doctrine, and bears his yoke, though he forſake both father and mother, ſeparate from the public aſſembly and ceremonies of his country, or whomſoever, or whatſoever elſe he relinquiſhes, will not then be judged an heretic.

Now, though the diviſions that

are amongſt ſects ſhould be allowed to be never ſo obſtructive of the ſalvation of ſouls; yet, nevertheleſs, 'adultery, fornication, 'uncleanneſs, laſciviouſneſs, ido-'latry, and ſuch like things, can-'not be denied to be works of the 'fleſh' (*Gal.* v.); concerning which the Apoſtle has expreſly declared, that 'they who do them ſhall not 'inherit the kingdom of God.' Whoſoever therefore is ſincerely ſolicitous about the kingdom of God, and thinks it his duty to endeavour the enlargement of it amongſt men, ought to apply himſelf with no leſs care and induſtry to the rooting out of theſe

immoralities, than to the extirpation of ſects. But if any one do otherwiſe, and whilſt he is cruel and implacable towards thoſe that differ from him in opinion, he be indulgent to ſuch iniquities and immoralities as are unbecoming the name of a Chriſtian, let ſuch a one talk never ſo much of the church, he plainly demonſtrates by his actions, that it is another kingdom he aims at, and not the advancement of the kingdom of God.

That any man ſhould think fit to cauſe another man, whoſe ſalvation he heartily deſires, to ex-

pire in torments, and that even in an unconverted eſtate, would, I confeſs, ſeem very ſtrange to me; and, I think, to any other alſo. But no body, ſurely, will ever believe that ſuch a carriage can proceed from charity, love, or good-will. If any one maintain, that men ought to be compelled by fire and ſword to profeſs certain doctrines, and conform to this or that exterior worſhip, without any regard had unto their morals; if any one endeavour to convert thoſe that are erroneous unto the faith, by forcing them to profeſs things that they do not believe, and allowing them to prac-

tiſe things that the goſpel does not permit; it cannot be doubted indeed but ſuch a one is deſirous to have a numerous aſſembly joined in the ſame profeſſion with himſelf: but that he principally intends by thoſe means to compoſe a truly Chriſtian church, is altogether incredible. It is not therefore to be wondered at, if thoſe who do not really contend for the advancement of the true religion, and of the church of Chriſt, make uſe of arms that do not belong to the Chriſtian warfare. If, like the Captain of our ſalvation, they ſincerely deſired the good of ſouls, they would

tread in the ſteps, and follow the perfect example of that Prince of Peace, who ſent out his ſoldiers to the ſubduing of nations, and gathering them into his church, not armed with the ſword, or other inſtruments of force, but prepared with the goſpel of peace, and with the exemplary holineſs of their converſation. This was his method. Though, if infidels were to be converted by force, if thoſe that are either blind or obſtinate were to be drawn off from their errors by armed ſoldiers, we know very well that it was much more eaſy for him to do it with armies of heavenly legions, than

for any ſon of the church, how potent ſoever, with all his dragoons.

The toleration of thoſe that differ from others in matters of religion, is ſo agreeable to the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, and to the genuine reaſon of mankind, that it ſeems monſtrous for men to be ſo blind as not to perceive the neceſſity and advantage of it in ſo clear a light. I will not here tax the pride and ambition of ſome, the paſſion and uncharitable zeal of others. Theſe are faults from which human affairs can perhaps ſcarce ever be perfectly freed, but

yet ſuch as no body will bear the plain imputation of, without covering them with ſome ſpecious colour; and ſo pretend to commendation, whilſt they are carried away by their own irregular paſſions. But, however, that ſome may not colour their ſpirit of perſecution and unchriſtian cruelty, with a pretence of care of the public weal and obſervation of the laws; and that others, under pretence of religion, may not ſeek impunity for their libertiniſm and licentiouſneſs: in a word, that none may impoſe either upon himſelf or others, by pretences of loyalty and obedience to the

prince, or of tenderneſs and ſincerity in the worſhip of God; I eſteem it above all things neceſſary to diſtinguiſh exactly the buſineſs of civil government from that of religion, and to ſettle the juſt bounds that lie between the one and the other. If this be not done, there can be no end put to the controverſies that will be always ariſing between thoſe that have, or at leaſt pretend to have, on the one ſide, a concernment for the intereſt of mens ſouls, and on the other ſide, a care of the common-wealth,

The common-wealth ſeems to

me to be a ſociety of men conſtituted only for the procuring, preſerving, and advancing of their own civil intereſts.

Civil intereſts I call life, liberty, health, and indolency of body, and the poſſeſſion of outward things, ſuch as money, lands, houſes, furniture, and the like.

It is the duty of the civil magiſtrate, by the impartial execution of equal laws, to ſecure unto all the people in general, and to every one of his ſubjects in particular, the juſt poſſeſſion of theſe things belonging to this life. If

any one preſume to violate the laws of public juſtice and equity, eſtabliſhed for the preſervation of theſe things, his preſumption is to be checked by the fear of puniſhment, conſiſting in the deprivation or diminution of thoſe civil intereſts, or goods, which otherwiſe he might and ought to enjoy. But ſeeing no man does willingly ſuffer himſelf to be puniſhed by the deprivation of any part of his goods, and much leſs of his liberty or life, therefore is the magiſtrate armed with the force and ſtrength of all his ſubjects, in order to the puniſhment of thoſe that violate any other man's rights,

Now, that the whole juriſdiction of the magiſtrate reaches only to theſe civil concernments; and that all civil power, right, and dominion, is bounded and confined to the only care of promoting theſe things, and that it neither can nor ought in any manner to be extended to the ſalvation of ſouls; theſe following conſiderations ſeem unto me abundantly to demonſtrate:

Firſt, Becauſe the care of ſouls is not committed to the civil magiſtrate any more than to other men. It is not committed unto him, I ſay, by God; be-

cauſe it appears not that God has ever given any ſuch authority to one man over another, as to compel any one to his religion. Nor can any ſuch power be veſted in the magiſtrate by the 'conſent of the people;' becauſe no man can ſo far abandon the care of his own ſalvation, as blindly to leave it to the choice of any other, whether prince or ſubject, to preſcribe to him what faith or worſhip he ſhall embrace: for no man can, if he would, conform his faith to the dictates of another. All the life and power of true religion conſiſts in the inward and full per-

ſuaſion of the mind; and faith is not faith without believing. Whatever profeſſion we make, to whatever outward worſhip we conform, if we are not fully ſatisfied in our mind that the one is true, and the other well-pleaſing unto God; ſuch profeſſion, and ſuch practice, far from being any furtherance, are indeed great obſtacles to our ſalvation. For in offering thus unto God almighty ſuch a worſhip as we eſteem to be diſpleaſing unto him, we add unto the number of our other ſins thoſe alſo of hypocriſy, and contempt of his divine majeſty.

In the ſecond place, the care of ſouls cannot belong to the civil magiſtrate, becauſe his power conſiſts only in outward force: but true and ſaving religion conſiſts in the inward perſuaſion of the mind; without which nothing can be acceptable to God. And ſuch is the nature of the underſtanding, that it cannot be compelled to the belief of any thing by outward force. Confiſcation of eſtate, impriſonment, torments; nothing of that nature can have any ſuch efficacy, as to make men change the inward judgment that they have framed of things.

It may indeed be alleged, that the magiſtrate may make uſe of arguments, and thereby draw the heterodox into the way of truth, and procure their ſalvation. I grant it: but this is common to him with other men. In teaching, inſtructing, and redreſſing the erroneous by reaſon, he may certainly do what becomes any good man to do. Magiſtracy does not oblige him to put off either humanity or Chriſtianity. But it is one thing to perſuade, another to command: one thing to preſs with arguments, another with penalties. This the civil power

alone has a right to do: to the other, good-will is authority enough. Every man has commiſſion to admoniſh, exhort, convince another of error; and by reaſoning to draw him into truth: but to give laws, receive obedience, and compel with the ſword, belongs to none but the magiſtrate. And upon this ground I affirm, that the magiſtrate's power extends not to the eſtabliſhing of any articles of faith, or forms of worſhip, by the force of his laws. For laws are of no force at all without penalties, and penalties in this caſe are abſolutely imperti-

nent, becauſe they are not proper to convince the mind. Neither the profeſſion of any articles of faith, nor the conformity to any outward form of worſhip (as has already been ſaid) can be available to the ſalvation of ſouls, unleſs the truth of the one, and the acceptableneſs of the other unto God, be thoroughly believed by thoſe that ſo profeſs and practiſe. But penalties are no ways capable to produce ſuch belief. It is only light and evidence that can work a change in mens opinions; and that light can in no manner proceed from corporal

ſufferings, or any other outward penalties.

In the third place, The care of the ſalvation of mens ſouls cannot belong to the magiſtrate; becauſe, though the rigour of laws, and the force of penalties were capable to convince and change mens minds, yet would not that help at all to the ſalvation of their ſouls. For there being but one truth, one way to heaven, what hopes is there that more men would be led into it, if they had no other rule to follow but the religion of the court, and were put under a neceſſity to quit the light of their

own reaſon, to oppoſe the dictates of their own conſciences, and blindly to reſign up themſelves to the will of their governors, and to the religion which either ignorance, ambition, or ſuperſtition had chanced to eſtabliſh in the countries where they were born? In the variety and contradiction of opinions in religion, wherein the princes of the world are as much divided as in their ſecular intereſts, the narrow way would be much ſtraitened. One country alone would be in the right, and all the reſt of the world would be put under an obligation of following their princes in the ways

that lead to deſtruction. And that which heightens the abſurdity, and very ill ſuits the notion of a Deity, men would owe their eternal happineſs or miſery to the places of their nativity.

Theſe conſiderations, to omit many others that might have been urged to the ſame purpoſe, ſeem unto me ſufficient to conclude, that all the power of civil government relates only to mens civil intereſts; is confined to the care of the things of this world, and hath nothing to do with the world to come.

Let us now conſider what a CHURCH is. A church then I take to be 'A voluntary ſociety 'of men joining themſelves to-'gether of their own accord, in 'order to the public worſhipping 'of God in ſuch a manner as they 'judge acceptable to him, and 'effectual to the ſalvation of their 'ſouls.'

I ſay, it is a free and volun-tary ſociety. No body is born a member of any church, otherwiſe the religion of parents would de-ſcend unto children by the ſame right of inheritance as their tem-poral eſtates, and every one would

hold his faith by the ſame tenure he does his lands; than which nothing can be imagined more abſurd. Thus, therefore, that matter ſtands: No man by nature is bound unto any particular church or ſect, but every one joins himſelf voluntarily to that ſociety in which he believes he has found that profeſſion and worſhip which is truly acceptable unto God. The hopes of ſalvation, as it was the only cauſe of his entrance into that communion, ſo it can be the only reaſon of his ſtay there: for if afterwards he diſcover any thing either erroneous in the doctrine, or incongruous

in the worſhip of that ſociety to which he has joined himſelf; why ſhould it not be as free for him to go out, as it was to enter? No member of a religious ſociety can be tied with any other bonds but what proceed from the certain expectation of eternal life. A church then is a ſociety of members voluntarily uniting to this end.

It follows now that we conſider what is the power of this church, and unto what laws it is ſubject.

Foraſmuch as no ſociety, how free ſo ever, or upon whatſoever

ſlight occaſion inſtituted, (whether of philoſophers for learning, of merchants for commerce, or of men of leiſure for mutual converſation and diſcourſe) no church or company, I ſay, can in the leaſt ſubſiſt and hold together, but will preſently diſſolve and break to pieces, unleſs it be regulated by ſome laws, and the members all conſent to obſerve ſome order: place and time of meeting muſt be agreed on; rules for admitting and excluding members muſt be eſtabliſhed; diſtinction of officers, and putting things into regular courſe, and ſuch like, cannot be

omitted. But ſince the joining together of ſeveral members into this church-ſociety, as has already been demonſtrated, is abſolutely free and ſpontaneous, it neceſſarily follows, that the right of making its laws can belong to none but the ſociety itſelf, or at leaſt (which is the ſame thing) to thoſe whom the ſociety by common conſent has authoriſed thereto.

Some perhaps may object, that no ſuch ſociety can be ſaid to be a true church, unleſs it have in it a biſhop, or preſbyter, with ruling authority derived from the

very apoſtles, and continued down unto the preſent times by an uninterrupted ſucceſſion.

To theſe I anſwer, in the firſt place, Let them ſhew me the edict by which Chriſt has impoſed that law upon his church. And let not any man think me impertinent, if in a thing of this conſequence, I require that the terms of that edict be very expreſs and poſitive; for the promiſe he has made us, that 'whereſoever two 'or three are gathered together in 'his name, he will be in the midſt 'of them,' ſeems to imply the contrary. Whether ſuch an af-

ſembly want any thing neceſſary to a true church, pray do you conſider. Certain I am, that nothing can be there wanting unto the ſalvation of ſouls; which is ſufficient to our purpoſe.

Next, Pray obſerve how great have always been the diviſions amongſt even thoſe who lay ſo much ſtreſs upon the divine inſtitution, and continued ſucceſſion of a certain order of rulers in the church. Now their very diſſention unavoidably puts us upon a neceſſity of deliberating, and conſequently allows a liberty of chooſing that

which upon conſideration we prefer,

And in the laſt place, I conſent that theſe men have a ruler of their church, eſtabliſhed by ſuch a long ſeries of ſucceſſion as they judge neceſſary, provided I may have liberty at the ſame time to join myſelf to that ſociety, in which I am perſuaded thoſe things are to be found which are neceſſary to the ſalvation of my ſoul. In this manner eccleſiaſtical liberty will be preſerved on all ſides, and no man will have a legiſlator impoſed upon him but whom himſelf has choſen.

But ſince men are ſo ſolicitous about the true church, I would only aſk them here by the way, if it be not more agreeable to the church of Chriſt, to make the conditions of her communion conſiſt in ſuch things, and ſuch things only, as the holy Spirit has, in the holy ſcriptures, declared in expreſs words to be neceſſary to ſalvation? I aſk, I ſay, whether this be not more agreeable to the church of Chriſt, than for men to impoſe their own inventions and interpretations upon others, as if they were of divine authority, and to eſtabliſh, by eccleſiaſtical laws,

as abſolutely neceſſary to the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, ſuch things as the holy ſcriptures do either not mention, or, at leaſt, not expreſsly command? Whoſoever requires thoſe things in order to eccleſiaſtical communion, which Chriſt does not require in order to life eternal, he may perhaps indeed conſtitute a ſociety accommodated to his own opinion, and his own advantage; but how that can be called the church of Chriſt, which is eſtabliſhed upon laws that are not his, and which excludes ſuch perſons from its communion as he will one day receive into the kingdom of heaven, I un-

derſtand not. But this being not a proper place to enquire into the marks of the true church, I will only mind thoſe that contend ſo earneſtly for the decrees of their own ſociety, and that cry out continually, 'the church, the 'church,' with as much noiſe, and perhaps upon the ſame principle, as the Epheſian ſilverſmiths did with their Diana: this, I ſay, I deſire to mind them of, that the goſpel frequently declares, that the true diſciples of Chriſt muſt ſuffer perſecution: but that the church of Chriſt ſhould perſecute others, and force others by fire and ſword to embrace her faith

and doctrine, I could never yet find in any of the books of the New Teſtament.

The end of a religious ſociety (as has already been ſaid) is the public worſhip of God, and by means thereof the acquiſition of eternal life. All diſcipline ought therefore to tend to that end, and all eccleſiaſtical laws to be thereunto confined. Nothing ought nor can be tranſacted in this ſociety, relating to the poſſeſſion of civil and worldly goods. No force is here to be made uſe of upon any occaſion whatſoever; for force belongs wholly to the

civil magiſtrate, and the poſſeſſion of all outward goods is ſubject to his juriſdiction.

But it may be aſked, by what means then ſhall eccleſiaſtical laws be eſtabliſhed, if they muſt be thus deſtitute of all compulſive power? I anſwer, they muſt be eſtabliſhed by means ſuitable to the nature of ſuch things, whereof the external profeſſion and obſervation, if not proceeding from a thorough conviction and approbation of the mind, is altogether uſeleſs and unprofitable. The arms by which the members of this ſociety are to be kept within their

duty, are exhortations, admonitions, and advices. If by theſe means the offenders will not be reclaimed, and the erroneous convinced, there remains nothing farther to be done, but that ſuch ſtubborn and obſtinate perſons, who give no ground to hope for their reformation, ſhould be caſt out and ſeparated from the ſociety. This is the laſt and utmoſt force of eccleſiaſtical authority. No other puniſhment can thereby be inflicted, than that the relation ceaſing between the body and the member which is cut off, the perſon ſo condemned ceaſes to be a part of that church.

Theſe things being thus determined, let us enquire, in the next place, how far the duty of toleration extends, and what is required from every one by it.

And, firſt, I hold, That no church is bound, by the duty of toleration, to retain any ſuch perſon in her boſom, as, after admonition, continues obſtinately to offend againſt the laws of the ſociety: for theſe being the condition of communion, and the bond of the ſociety; if the breach of them were permitted without any animadverſion, the ſociety would immediately be thereby

diſſolved. But nevertheleſs, in all ſuch caſes, care is to be taken that the ſentence of excommunication, and the execution thereof, carry with it no rough uſage of word or action, whereby the ejected perſon may anywiſe be damnified in body or eſtate. For all force as (has often been ſaid) belongs only to the magiſtrate; nor ought any private perſon, at any time, to uſe force, unleſs it be in ſelf-defence againſt unjuſt violence. Excommunication neither does, nor can deprive the excommunicated perſon of any of thoſe civil goods that he formerly poſſeſſed. All thoſe

things belong to the civil government, and are under the magiſtrate's protection. The whole force of excommunication conſiſts only in this, that the reſolution of the ſociety in that reſpect being declared, the union that was between the body and ſome member comes thereby to be diſſolved; and that relation ceaſing, the participation of ſome certain things, which the ſociety communicated to its members, and unto which no man has any civil right, comes alſo to ceaſe: for there is no civil injury done unto the excommunicated perſon, by the church-miniſter's refuſing him that bread and wine,

in the celebration of the Lord's ſupper, which was not bought with his, but other mens money.

Secondly, No private perſon has any right, in any manner, to prejudice another perſon in his civil enjoyments, becauſe he is of another church or religion. All the rights and franchiſes that belong to him as a man, or as a denizen, are inviolably to be preſerved to him. Theſe are not the buſineſs of religion. No violence nor injury is to be offered him, whether he be Chriſtian or Pagan. Nay, we muſt not content ourſelves with the narrow meaſures

of bare juſtice; charity, bounty, and liberality muſt be added to it. This the goſpel enjoins; this reaſon directs; and this that natural fellowſhip we are born into requires of us. If any man err from the right way, it is his own misfortune, no injury to thee; nor therefore art thou to puniſh him in the things of this life, becauſe thou ſuppoſeſt he will be miſerable in that which is to come.

What I ſay concerning the mutual toleration of private perſons differing from one another in religion, I underſtand alſo of parti-

cular churches, which ſtand as it were in the ſame relation to each other as private perſons among themſelves; nor has any one of them any manner of juriſdiction over any other, no not even when the civil magiſtrate (as it ſometimes happens) comes to be of this or the other communion. For the civil government can give no new light to the church, nor the church to the civil government: ſo that whether the magiſtrate join himſelf to any church, or ſeparate from it, the church remains always as it was before, a free and voluntary ſociety. It neither acquires the power of the

ſword by the magiſtrate's coming to it, nor does it loſe the right of inſtruction and excommunication by his going from it. This is the fundamental and immutable right of a ſpontaneous ſociety, that it has power to remove any of its members who tranſgreſs the rules of its inſtitution; but it cannot, by the acceſſion of any new members, acquire any right of juriſdiction over thoſe that are not joined with it. And therefore peace, equity, and friendſhip, are always mutually to be obſerved by particular churches, in the ſame manner as by private perſons, without any pretence of

ſuperiority or juriſdiction over one another.

That the thing may be made yet clearer by example, let us ſuppoſe two churches, the one of Arminians, the other of Calviniſts, reſiding in the city of Conſtantinople: will any one ſay, that either of theſe churches has right to deprive the members of the other of their eſtates and liberty, (as we ſee practiſed elſewhere) becauſe of their differing from it in ſome doctrines or ceremonies; whilſt the Turks, in the mean while, ſilently ſtand by, and laugh to ſee with what inhuman cruelty

Chriſtians thus rage againſt Chriſtians? But if one of theſe churches hath this power of treating the other ill, I aſk which of them it is to whom that power belongs, and by what right? It will be anſwered undoubtedly, that it is the orthodox church which has the right of authority over the erroneous and heretical. This is, in great and ſpecious words, to ſay juſt nothing at all: for every church is orthodox to itſelf; to others, erroneous or heretical. Whatſoever any church believes, it believes to be true, and the contrary thereunto it pronounces to be error: ſo that the contro-

verſy between theſe churches about the truth of their doctrines, and the purity of their worſhip; is on both ſides equal; nor is there any judge, either at Conſtantinople, or elſewhere upon the earth, by whoſe ſentence it can be determined. The deciſion of that queſtion belongs only to the ſupreme Judge of all men, to whom alſo alone belongs the puniſhment of the erroneous. In the mean while, let thoſe men conſider how heinouſly they ſin, who, adding injuſtice, if not to their error, yet certainly to their pride, do raſhly and arrogantly take upon them to miſuſe the

ſervants of another maſter, who are not at all accountable to them.

Nay farther, if it could be manifeſt which of theſe two diſſenting churches were in the right way, there would not accrue thereby to the orthodox any right of deſtroying the other; for churches have neither any juriſdiction in worldly matters, nor are fire and ſword any proper inſtruments wherewith to convince mens minds of error, and inform them of the truth. Let us ſuppoſe, nevertheleſs, that the civil magiſtrate inclined to favour one of them, and to put his ſword

into their hands, that (by his conſent) they might chaſtiſe the diſſenters as they pleaſed; will any man ſay, that any right can be derived unto a Chriſtian church over its brethren, from a Turkiſh emperor? An infidel, who has no authority to puniſh Chriſtians for the articles of their faith, cannot confer ſuch an authority upon any ſociety of Chriſtians, nor give unto them a right which he has not himſelf. This would be the caſe at Conſtantinople; and the reaſon of the thing is the ſame in any Chriſtian kingdom. The civil power is the ſame in every place; nor can that power, in

the hands of a Chriſtian prince, confer any greater authority upon the church, than in the hands of a heathen; which is to ſay, juſt none at all.

Nevertheleſs, it is worthy to be obſerved, and lamented, that the moſt violent of theſe defenders of the truth, the oppoſers of errors, the exclaimers againſt ſchiſm, do hardly ever let looſe this their zeal for God, with which they are ſo warmed and inflamed, unleſs where they have the civil magiſtrate on their ſide; but ſo ſoon as ever court-favour has given them the better end of

the ſtaff, and they begin to feel themſelves the ſtronger, then preſently peace and charity are to be laid aſide; otherwiſe, they are religiouſly to be obſerved. Where they have not the power to carry on perſecution, and to become maſters, there they deſire to live upon fair terms, and preach up toleration. When they are not ſtrengthened with the civil power, then they can bear moſt patiently and unmovedly the contagion of idolatry, ſuperſtition, and hereſy in their neighbourhood; of which, in other occaſions, the intereſt of religion makes them to be extremely ap-

prehenſive. They do not forwardly attack thoſe errors which are in faſhion at court, or are countenanced by the government. Here they can be content to ſpare their arguments; which yet (with their leave) is the only right method of propagating truth; which has no ſuch way of prevailing, as when ſtrong arguments and good reaſon are joined with the ſoftneſs of civility and good uſage.

No body, therefore, in fine, neither ſingle perſons nor churches, nay, nor even commonwealths, have any juſt title to invade the civil rights and worldly goods of

each other upon pretence of religion. Thoſe that are of another opinion, would do well to conſider with themſelves how pernicious a ſeed of diſcord and war, how powerful a provocation to endleſs hatreds, rapines and ſlaughters, they thereby furniſh unto mankind. No peace and ſecurity, no not ſo much as common friendſhip, can ever be eſtabliſhed or preſerved amongſt men, ſo long as this opinion prevails, 'That 'dominion is founded in grace, 'and that religion is to be pro-'pagated by force of arms.'

In the third place, let us ſee

what the duty of toleration requires from thoſe who are diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of mankind (from the Laity, as they pleaſe to call us) by ſome eccleſiaſtical character and office; whether they be biſhops, prieſts, preſbyters, miniſters, or however elſe dignified or diſtinguiſhed. It is not my buſineſs to enquire here into the original of the power or dignity of the clergy. This only I ſay, that whence ſoever their authority be ſprung, ſince it is eccleſiaſtical, it ought to be confined within the bounds of the church, nor can it in any manner be extended to civil affairs; becauſe

the church itſelf is a thing abſolutely ſeparate and diſtinct from the commonwealth: the boundaries on both ſides are fixed and immoveable. He jumbles heaven and earth together, the things moſt remote and oppoſite, who mixes theſe ſocieties, which are in their original, end, buſineſs, and in every thing, perfectly diſtinct, and infinitely different from each other. No man, therefore, with whatſoever eccleſiaſtical office he be dignified, can deprive another man that is not of his church and faith, either of liberty, or of any part of his worldly goods, upon the account of that

difference which is between them in religion: for whatever is not lawful to the whole church, cannot, by any eccleſiaſtical right, become lawful to any of its members.

But this is not all: it is not enough that eccleſiaſtical men abſtain from violence and rapine, and all manner of perſecution. He that pretends to be a ſucceſſor of the apoſtles, and takes upon him the office of teaching, is obliged alſo to admoniſh his hearers of the duties of peace and good-will towards all men, as well towards the erroneous as the orthodox;

towards thoſe that differ from them in faith and worſhip, as well as towards thoſe that agree with them therein. And he ought induſtriouſly to exhort all men, whether private perſons or magiſtrates, (if any ſuch there be in his church) to charity, meekneſs, and toleration; and diligently endeavour to allay and temper all that heat and unreaſonable averſeneſs of mind, which either any man's fiery zeal for his own ſect, or the craft of others, has kindled againſt diſſenters. I will not undertake to repreſent how happy and how great would be the fruit, both in church and ſtate, if the pulpits

every where ſounded with this doctrine of peace and toleration, leſt I ſhould ſeem to reflect too ſeverely upon thoſe men whoſe dignity I deſire not to detract from, nor would have it diminiſhed either by others or themſelves: but this I ſay, that thus it ought to be. And if any one that profeſſes himſelf to be a miniſter of the word of God, a preacher of the goſpel of peace, teach otherwiſe, he either underſtands not, or neglects the buſineſs of his calling, and ſhall one day give account thereof unto the Prince of Peace. If Chriſtians are to be admoniſhed that they abſtain from all manner

of revenge, even after repeated provocations and multiplied injuries, how much more ought they who ſuffer nothing, who have had no harm done them, forbear violence, and abſtain from all manner of ill uſage towards thoſe from whom they have received none? This caution and temper they ought certainly to uſe towards thoſe who mind only their own buſineſs, and are ſolicitous for nothing but that (whatever men think of them) they may worſhip God in that manner which they are perſuaded is acceptable to him, and in which they have the ſtrongeſt hopes of eternal ſal-

vation. In private domeſtic affairs, in the management of eſtates, in the conſervation of bodily health, every man may conſider what ſuits his own conveniency, and follow what courſe he likes beſt. No man complains of the ill management of his neighbour's affairs. No man is angry with another for an error committed in ſowing his land, or in marrying his daughter. No body corrects a ſpend-thrift for conſuming his ſubſtance in taverns. Let any man pull down, or build, or make whatſoever expences he pleaſes, no body murmurs, no body controuls him; he has his

liberty: but if any man do not frequent the church, if he do not there conform his behaviour exactly to the accuſtomed ceremonies, if he brings not his children to be initiated in the ſacred myſteries of this or the other congregation; this immediately cauſes an uproar, and the neighbourhood is filled with noiſe and clamour, every one is ready to be the avenger of ſo great a crime; and the zealots hardly have patience to refrain from violence and rapine ſo long till the cauſe be heard, and the poor man be, according to form, condemned to the loſs of liberty, goods, or life.

Oh that our eccleſiaſtical orators, of every ſect, would apply themſelves with all the ſtrength of arguments that they are able, to the confounding of mens errors! but let them ſpare their perſons. Let them not ſupply their want of reaſons with the inſtruments of force, which belong to another juriſdiction, and do ill become a churchman's hands. Let them not call in the magiſtrate's authority to the aid of their eloquence or learning, leſt, perhaps, while they pretend only love for the truth, this their intemperate zeal, breathing nothing but fire and ſword, betray their ambition, and

ſhew that what they deſire is temporal dominion: for it will be very difficult to perſuade men of ſenſe, that he who with dry eyes, and ſatisfaction of mind, can deliver his brother unto the executioner to be burnt alive, does ſincerely and heartily concern himſelf to ſave that brother from the flames of hell in the world to come.

In the laſt place, let us conſider what is the magiſtrate's duty in the buſineſs of toleration.

We have already proved, that

the care of ſouls does not belong to the magiſtrate. Not a magiſterial care, I mean, (if I may ſo call it) which conſiſts in preſcribing by laws, and compelling by puniſhments; but a charitable care, which conſiſts in teaching, admoniſhing, and perſuading, cannot be denied unto any man. The care therefore of every man's ſoul belongs unto himſelf, and is to be left unto himſelf. But what if he neglect the care of his ſoul? I anſwer, what if he neglect the care of his health, or of his eſtate; which things are nearlier related to the government of the magiſtrate than the other? Will the

magiſtrate provide, by an expreſs law, that ſuch a one ſhall not become poor, or ſick? Laws provide, as much as is poſſible, that the goods and health of ſubjects be not injured by the fraud or violence of others; they do not guard them from the negligence or ill huſbandry of the poſſeſſors themſelves. No man can be forced to be rich or healthful whether he will or no, Nay, God himſelf will not ſave men againſt their wills. Let us ſuppoſe, however, that ſome prince were deſirous to force his ſubjects to accumulate riches, or to preſerve the health and ſtrength of their bodies; ſhall

it be provided by law, that they muſt conſult none but Roman phyſicians? and ſhall every one be bound to live according to their preſcriptions? What! ſhall no potion, no broth be taken, but what is prepared either in the Vatican, ſuppoſe, or in a Geneva ſhop? Or, to make theſe ſubjects rich, ſhall they all be obliged by law to become merchants, or muſicians? Or, ſhall every one turn victualler, or ſmith, becauſe there are ſome that maintain their families plentifully, and grow rich in thoſe profeſſions? But it may be ſaid, there are a thouſand ways to wealth, but

only one way to heaven. It is well ſaid indeed, eſpecially by thoſe that plead for compelling men into this or the other way; for if there were ſeveral ways that lead thither, there would not be ſo much as a pretence left for compulſion. But now, if I be marching on, with my utmoſt vigour, in that way which, according to the ſacred geography, leads ſtraight to Jeruſalem; why am I beaten and ill uſed by others, becauſe, perhaps, I wear not buſkins; becauſe my hair is not of the right cut; becauſe, perhaps, I have not been dipt in the right faſhion; becauſe I eat fleſh

upon the road, or ſome other food which agrees with my ſtomach; becauſe I avoid certain bye-ways, which ſeem unto me to lead into briars or precipices; becauſe, amongſt the ſeveral paths that are in the ſame road, I chuſe that to walk in which ſeems to be the ſtraighteſt and cleaneſt; becauſe I avoid to keep company with ſome travellers that are leſs grave, and others that are more ſour than they ought to be; or, in fine, becauſe I follow a guide that either is, or is not clothed in white, and crowned with a mitre? Certainly, if we conſider right, we ſhall find that, for the moſt part, they are ſuch

frivolous things as theſe, that (without any prejudice to religion, or the ſalvation of ſouls, if not accompanied with ſuperſtition or hypocriſy) might either be obſerved or omitted: I ſay, they are ſuch like things as theſe, which breed implacable enmities amongſt Chriſtian brethren, who are all agreed in the ſubſtantial and truly fundamental part of religion.

But let us grant unto theſe zealots, who condemn all things that are not of their mode, that from theſe circumſtances ariſe different ends; what ſhall we conclude

from thence? There is only one of theſe which is the true way to eternal happineſs. But in this great variety of ways that men follow, it is ſtill doubted which is this right one. Now, neither the care of the commonwealth, nor the right of enacting laws, does diſcover this way that leads to heaven more certainly to the magiſtrate, than every private man's ſearch and ſtudy diſcovers it unto himſelf. I have a weak body, ſunk under a languiſhing diſeaſe, for which (I ſuppoſe) there is one only remedy, but that unknown; does it therefore belong unto the magi-

ſtrate to preſcribe me a remedy, becauſe there is but one, and becauſe it is unknown? Becauſe there is but one way for me to eſcape death, will it therefore be ſafe for me to do whatſoever the magiſtrate ordains? Thoſe things that every man ought ſincerely to enquire into himſelf, and by meditation, ſtudy, ſearch, and his own endeavours, attain the knowledge of, cannot be looked upon as the peculiar poſſeſſion of any one ſort of men. Princes indeed are born ſuperior unto other men in power, but in nature equal. Neither the right, nor the art of ruling, does neceſſarily carry along with it the

certain knowledge of other things, and leaſt of all of the true religion: for, if it were ſo, how could it come to paſs that the lords of the earth ſhould differ ſo vaſtly as they do in religious matters? But let us grant that it is probable the way to eternal life may be better known by a prince than by his ſubjects; or at leaſt, that, in this incertitude of things, the ſafeſt and moſt commodious way for private perſons is to follow his dictates. You will ſay, What then? If he ſhould bid you follow merchandiſe for your livelihood, would you decline that courſe for fear it ſhould not ſuc-

ceed? I anſwer, I would turn merchant upon the prince's command, becauſe, in caſe I ſhould have ill ſucceſs in trade, he is abundantly able to make up my loſs ſome other way. If it be true, as he pretends, that he deſires I ſhould thrive and grow rich, he can ſet me up again when unſucceſsful voyages have broke me. But this is not the caſe in the things that regard the life to come: if there I take a wrong courſe, if in that reſpect I am once undone, it is not in the magiſtrate's power to repair my loſs, to eaſe my ſuffering, or to reſtore me in any meaſure, much leſs entirely, to a

good eſtate. What ſecurity can be given for the kingdom of heaven?

Perhaps ſome will ſay, that they do not ſuppoſe this infallible judgment, that all men are bound to follow in the affairs of religion, to be in the civil magiſtrate, but in the church. What the church has determined, that the civil magiſtrate orders to be obſerved; and he provides by his authority, that no body ſhall either act or believe in the buſineſs of religion otherwiſe than the church teaches: ſo that the judgment of thoſe things is in the church.

The magiſtrate himſelf yields obedience thereunto, and requires the like obedience from others. I anſwer, who ſees not how frequently the name of the church, which was ſo venerable in the time of the apoſtles, has been made uſe of to throw duſt in peoples eyes in following ages? But, however, in the preſent caſe it helps us not. The one only narrow way which leads to heaven, is not better known to the magiſtrate than to private perſons; and therefore I cannot ſafely take him for my guide, who may probably be as ignorant of the way as myſelf, and who cer-

tainly is leſs concerned for my ſalvation than I myſelf am. Amongſt ſo many kings of the Jews, how many of them were there whom any Iſraelite, thus blindly following, had not fallen into idolatry, and thereby into deſtruction? Yet nevertheleſs, you bid me be of good courage, and tell me that all is now ſafe and ſecure, becauſe the magiſtrate does not now enjoin the obſervance of his own decrees in matters of religion, but only the decrees of the church. Of what church, I beſeech you? Of that certainly which likes him beſt: as if he that compels me by laws and penalties to enter

into this or the other church, did not interpoſe his own judgment in the matter. What difference is there whether he lead me himſelf, or deliver me over to be led by others? I depend both ways upon his will? and it is he that determines both ways of my eternal ſtate. Would an Iſraelite, that had worſhipped Baal upon the command of his king, have been in any better condition, becauſe ſomebody had told him that the king ordered nothing in religion upon his own head, nor commanded any thing to be done by his ſubjects in divine worſhip, but what was approved by the coun-

ſel of prieſts, and declared to be of divine right by the doctors of their church? If the religion of any church become therefore true and ſaving, becauſe the heads of that ſect, the prelates and prieſts, and thoſe of that tribe, do all of them, with all their might, extol and praiſe it; what religion can ever be accounted erroneous, falſe and deſtructive? I am doubtful concerning the doctrine of the Socinians, I am ſuſpicious of the way of worſhip practiſed by the Papiſts, or Lutherans? Will it be ever a jot the ſafer for me to join either unto the one or the other of thoſe churches upon the

magiſtrate's command, becauſe he commands nothing in religion but by the authority and counſel of the doctors of that church?

But, to ſpeak the truth, we muſt acknowledge, that the church (if a convention of clergymen, making canons, muſt be called by that name) is for the moſt part more apt to be influenced by the court, than the court by the church. How the church was under the viciſſitude of orthodox and Arian emperors, is very well known. Or, if thoſe things be too remote, the Engliſh hiſtory affords us freſher examples, in the

reigns of Henry VIII. Edw. VI. Mary, and Elizabeth, how eaſily and ſmoothly the clergy changed their decrees, their articles of faith, their form of worſhip, every thing, according to the inclination of thoſe kings and queens: Yet were thoſe kings and queens of ſuch different minds, in point of religion, and enjoined thereupon ſuch different things, that no man in his wits, (I had almoſt ſaid, none but an athieſt) will preſume to ſay that any ſincere and upright worſhipper of God could, with a ſafe conſcience, obey their ſeveral decrees. To conclude, it is the ſame thing

whether a king that preſcribes laws to another man's religion, pretend to do it by his own judgement, or by the eccleſiaſtical authority and advice of others. The deciſions of churchmen, whoſe differences and diſputes are ſufficiently known, cannot be any ſounder or ſafer than his; nor can all their ſuffrages, joined together, add any new ſtrength unto the civil power. Though this alſo muſt be taken notice of, that princes ſeldom have any regard to the ſuffrages of eccleſiaſtics, that are not favourers of their own faith and way of worſhip.

But, after all, the principal conſideration, and which abſolutely determines this controverſy, is this; although the magiſtrate's opinion in religion be ſound, and the way that he appoints be truly evangelical, yet if I be not thoroughly perſuaded thereof in my own mind, there will be no ſafety for me in following it. No way whatſoever that I ſhall walk in, againſt the dictates of my conſcience, will ever bring me to the manſions of the bleſſed. I may grow rich by an art that I take no delight in; I may be cured of ſome diſeaſe by remedies that I have not faith in;

but I cannot be ſaved by a religion that I diſtruſt, and by a worſhip that I abhor. It is in vain for an unbeliever to take up the outward ſhew of another man's profeſſion, Faith only, and inward ſincerity, are the things that procure acceptance with God. The moſt likely and moſt approved remedy can have no effect upon the patient, if his ſtomach reject it as ſoon as taken: and you will in vain cram a medicine down a ſick man's throat, which his particular conſtitution will be ſure to turn into poiſon. In a word, whatſoever may be doubtful in religion, yet this at leaſt is

certain, that no religion, which I believe not to be true, can be either true or profitable unto me. In vain therefore do princes compel their ſubjects to come into their church-communion, under pretence of ſaving their ſouls. If they believe, they will come of their own accord; if they believe not, their coming will nothing avail them. How great ſoever, in fine, may be the pretence of good-will and charity, and concern for the ſalvation of mens ſouls, men cannot be forced to be ſaved, whether they will or no. And therefore, when all is done, they

muſt be left to their own conſciences.

Having thus at length freed men from all dominion over one another in matters of religion, let us now conſider what they are to do. All men know and acknowledge that God ought to be publickly worſhipped; why otherwiſe do they compel one another to the public aſſemblies? Men therefore, conſtituted in this liberty, are to enter into ſome religious ſociety, that they may meet together, not only for mutual edification, but to own to the world that they worſhip God, and of-

fer unto his divine majeſty ſuch ſervice as they themſelves are not aſhamed of, and ſuch as they think not unworthy of him, nor unacceptable to him: and finally, that by the purity of doctrine, holineſs of life, and decent form of worſhip, they may draw others unto the love of the true religion, and perform ſuch other things in religion as cannot be done by each private man apart.

Theſe religious ſocieties I call churches; and theſe, I ſay, the magiſtrate ought to tolerate: for the buſineſs of theſe aſſemblies of people is nothing but what is

lawful for every man in particular to take care of; I mean, the ſalvation of their ſouls. And as in every church there are two things eſpecially to be conſidered, 'the outward form and rites of 'worſhip, and the doctrines and 'articles of faith,' theſe things muſt be handled each diſtinctly, that ſo the whole matter of toleration may the more clearly be underſtood.

Concerning outward worſhip, I ſay, in the firſt place, that the magiſtrate has no power to enforce by law, either in his own church, or much leſs in another,

the uſe of any rites or ceremonies whatſoever in the worſhip of God: and this not only becauſe theſe churches are free ſocieties, but becauſe whatſoever is practiſed in the worſhip of God, is only ſo far juſtifiable as it is believed by thoſe that practiſe it to be acceptable unto him. Whatſoever is not done with that aſſurance of faith, is neither well in itſelf, nor can it be acceptable to God. To impoſe ſuch things therefore upon any people, contrary to their own judgment, is in effect to command them to offend God; which, conſidering that the end of all religion is to

pleaſe him, and that liberty is eſſentially neceſſary to that end, appears to be abſurd beyond expreſſion.

But, perhaps, it may be concluded from hence, 'That I de-'ny unto the magiſtrate all man-'ner of power about indifferent 'things; which, if it be not 'granted, the whole ſubject mat-'ter of law-making is taken a-'way.' No; I readily grant that indifferent things, and perhaps none but ſuch, are ſubjected to the legiſlative power. But it does not therefore follow, that the magiſtrate may ordain what-

ſoever he pleaſes concerning any thing that is indifferent. The public good is the rule and meaſure of all law-making. If a thing be not uſeful to the commonwealth, though it be never ſo indifferent, it may not preſently be eſtabliſhed by law.

But, further, things never ſo indifferent in their own nature, when they are brought into the church and worſhip of God, are removed out of the reach of the magiſtrate's juriſdiction, becauſe, in that uſe, they have no connexion at all with civil affairs. The only buſineſs of the church is the ſalvation of ſouls; and it

no ways concerns the common-wealth, or any member of it, that this or the other ceremony be there made uſe of. Neither the uſe, nor the omiſſion of any ceremonies, in thoſe religious aſſemblies, does either advantage or prejudice the life, liberty, or eſtate of any man. For example, let it be granted, that the waſhing of an infant with water is in itſelf an indifferent thing: let it be granted alſo, that if the magiſtrate underſtand ſuch waſhing to be profitable to the curing or preventing of any diſeaſe that children are ſubject unto, and eſteem the matter weighty enough

to be taken care of by a law, in that caſe he may order it to be done. But will any one therefore ſay, that a magiſtrate has the ſame right to ordain by law, that all children ſhall be baptiſed by prieſts in the ſacred font, in order to the purification of their ſouls? The extreme difference of theſe two caſes is viſible to every one at firſt ſight. Or let us apply the laſt caſe to the child of a Jew, and the thing will ſpeak itſelf; for what hinders but a Chriſtian magiſtrate may have ſubjects that are Jews? Now, if we acknowledge that ſuch an injury may not be done unto a

Jew, as to compel him, againſt his own opinion, to practiſe in his religion a thing that is in its nature indifferent; how can we maintain that any thing of this kind may be done to a Chriſtian?

Again, things in their own nature indifferent, cannot, by any human authority, be made any part of the worſhip of God; for this very reaſon, becauſe they are indifferent; for ſince indifferent things are not capable, by any virtue of their own, to propitiate the Deity, no human power or authority can confer on them ſo

much dignity and excellency, as to enable them to do it. In the common affairs of life, that uſe of indifferent things which God has not forbidden, is free and lawful; and therefore in thoſe things human authority has place. But it is not ſo in matters of religion. Things indifferent are no otherwiſe lawful in the worſhip of God, than as they are inſtituted by God himſelf; and as he, by ſome poſitive command has ordained them to be made a part of that worſhip which he will vouchſafe to accept of at the hands of poor ſinful men: nor when an incenſed Deity ſhall aſk us, 'Who has re-

'quired theſe, or ſuch like things 'at your hands?' will it be enough to anſwer him, that the magiſtrate commanded them. If civil juriſdiction extended thus far, what might not lawfully be introduced into religion? What hodge-podge of ceremonies, what ſuperſtitious inventions, built upon the magiſtrate's authority, might not (againſt conſcience) be impoſed upon the worſhippers of God? For the greateſt part of theſe ceremonies and ſuperſtitions conſiſts in the religious uſe of ſuch things as are in their own nature indifferent; nor are they ſinful upon any other account than becauſe God is

not the author of them. The ſprinkling of water, and the uſe of bread and wine, are both in their own nature, and in the ordinary occaſions of life, altogether indifferent. Will any man therefore ſay, that theſe things could have been introduced into religion, and made a part of divine worſhip, if not by divine inſtitution? If any human authority or civil power could have done this, why might it not alſo enjoin the eating of fiſh, and drinking of ale, in the holy banquet, as a part of divine worſhip? Why not the ſprinkling of the blood of beaſts in churches, and expiations by wa-

ter or fire, and abundance more of this kind? But theſe things, how indifferent ſoever they be in common uſes, when they come to be annexed unto divine worſhip, without divine authority, they are as abominable to God as the ſacrifice of a dog. And why a dog ſo abominable? What difference is there between a dog and a goat, in reſpect of the divine nature, equally and infinitely diſtant from all affinity with matter, unleſs it be that God required the uſe of the one in his worſhip, and not of the other? We ſee therefore that indifferent things, how much ſoever they be under the

power of the civil magiſtrate, yet cannot upon that pretence be introduced into religion, and impoſed upon religious aſſemblies; becauſe, in the worſhip of God, they wholly ceaſe to be indifferent. He that worſhips God, does it with a deſign to pleaſe him, and procure his favour; but that cannot be done by him, who, upon the command of another, offers unto God that which he knows will be diſpleaſing to him, becauſe not commanded by himſelf. This is not to pleaſe God, but willingly and knowingly to provoke him by a manifeſt contempt; which is a thing abſo-

lutely repugnant to the nature and end of worſhip.

But it will here be aſked, 'If 'nothing belonging to divine 'worſhip be left to human diſ-'cretion, how is it then that 'churches themſelves have the 'power of ordering any thing a-'bout the time and place of wor-'ſhip, and the like?' To this I anſwer, that in religious worſhip we muſt diſtinguiſh between what is part of the worſhip itſelf, and what is but a circumſtance. That is a part of the worſhip which is believed to be appointed by God, and to be well-pleaſing to him,

and therefore that is neceſſary. Circumſtances are ſuch things which, though in general they cannot be ſeparated from worſhip, yet the particular inſtances or modifications of them are not determined, and therefore they are indifferent. Of this ſort are the time and place of worſhip, the habit and poſture of him that worſhips. Theſe are circumſtances, and perfectly indifferent, where God has not given any expreſs command about them. For example, amongſt the Jews, the time and place of their worſhip, and the habits of thoſe that officiated in it, were not mere cir-

cumſtances, but a part of the worſhip itſelf; in which, if any thing were defective, or different from the inſtitution, they could not hope that it would be accepted by God. But theſe, to Chriſtians under the liberty of the goſpel, are mere circumſtances of worſhip, which the prudence of every church may bring into ſuch uſe as ſhall be judged moſt ſubſervient to the end of order, decency, and edification. Though even under the goſpel alſo, thoſe who believe the firſt or ſeventh day to be ſet apart by God, and conſecrated ſtill to his worſhip, to them that portion of time is not a ſim-

ple circumſtance, but a real part of divine worſhip, which can neither be changed nor neglected.

In the next place, as the magiſtrate has no power to impoſe, by his laws, the uſe of any rites and ceremonies in any church, ſo neither has he any power to forbid the uſe of ſuch rites and ceremonies as are already received, approved, and practiſed by any church; becauſe, if he did ſo, he would deſtroy the church itſelf, the end of whoſe inſtitution is only to worſhip God with freedom, after its own manner.

You will ſay, 'By this rule, if 'ſome congregations ſhould have 'a mind to ſacrifice infants, or' (as the primitive Chriſtians were falſely accuſed) 'luſtfully pollute 'themſelves in promiſcuous un-'cleanneſs, or practiſe any other 'ſuch heinous enormities, is the 'magiſtrate obliged to tolerate 'them, becauſe they are commit-'ted in a religious aſſembly?' I anſwer, No. Theſe things are not lawful in the ordinary courſe of life, nor in any private houſe; and therefore neither are they ſo in the worſhip of God, or in any religious meeting. But indeed if any people, congregated upon ac-

count of religion, ſhould be deſirous to ſacrifice a calf, I deny that that ought to be prohibited by a law. Melibæus, whoſe calf it is, may lawfully kill his own calf at home, and burn any part of it that he thinks fit; for no injury is thereby done to any one, no prejudice to another man's goods: and for the ſame reaſon he may kill his calf alſo in a religious meeting. Whether the doing ſo be well-pleaſing to God, or no, it is their part to conſider that do it. The part of the magiſtrate is only to take care that the commonwealth receive no prejudice, and that there be no

injury done to any man, either in life or eſtate. And thus what may be ſpent on a feaſt, may be ſpent on a ſacrifice. But if, peradventure, ſuch were the ſtate of things, that the intereſt of the commonwealth required all ſlaughter of beaſts ſhould be forborn for ſome while, in order to the increaſing of the ſtock of cattle that had been deſtroyed by ſome extraordinary murrain; who ſees not that the magiſtrate, in ſuch a caſe, may forbid all his ſubjects to kill any calves for any uſe whatſoever? Only it is to be obſerved, that in this caſe the law is not made about a religious,

but a political matter; nor is the ſacrifice but the ſlaughter of calves thereby prohibited.

By this we ſee what difference there is between the church and the commonwealth. Whatſoever is lawful in the commonwealth, cannot be prohibited by the magiſtrate in the church. Whatſoever is permitted unto any one of his ſubjects for their ordinary uſe, neither can, nor ought to be forbidden by him to any ſect of people for their religious uſes. If any man may lawfully take bread or wine, either ſitting or kneeling, in his own houſe, the law

ought not to abridge him of the ſame liberty in his religious worſhip; though in the church the uſe of bread and wine be very different, and be there applied to the myſteries of faith, and rites of divine worſhip. But thoſe things that are prejudicial to the commonweal of a people in their ordinary uſe, and are therefore forbidden by laws, thoſe things ought not to be permitted to churches in their ſacred rites. Only the magiſtrate ought always to be very careful that he do not miſuſe his authority to the oppreſſion of any church, under pretence of public good.

It may be ſaid, 'What if a 'church be idolatrous? is that al-'ſo to be tolerated by the magi-'ſtrate?' In anſwer, I aſk, 'What 'power can be given to the ma-'giſtrate for the ſuppreſſion of an 'idolatrous church, which may 'not, in time and place, be made 'uſe of to the ruin of an ortho-'dox one?' For it muſt be remembered, that the civil power is the ſame every where, and the religion of every prince is orthodox to himſelf. If therefore ſuch a power be granted unto the civil magiſtrate in ſpirituals, as that at Geneva (for example), he may extirpate, by violence and blood,

the religion, which is there reputed idolatrous, by the ſame rule another magiſtrate, in ſome neighbouring country, may oppreſs the reformed religion, and, in India, the Chriſtian. The civil power can either change every thing in religion, according to the prince's pleaſure, or it can change nothing. If it be once permitted to introduce any thing into religion, by the means of laws and penalties, there can be no bounds put to it; but it will in the ſame manner be lawful to alter every thing, according to that rule of truth which the magiſtrate has framed unto himſelf. No man whatſoever

ought therefore to be deprived of his terreſtrial enjoyments upon account of his religion: not even Americans, ſubjected unto a Chriſtian prince, are to be puniſhed either in body or goods, for not embracing our faith and worſhip. If they are perſuaded that they pleaſe God in obſerving the rites of their own country, and that they ſhall obtain happineſs by that means, they are to be left unto God and themſelves. Let us trace this matter to the bottom. Thus it is. An inconſiderable and weak number of Chriſtians, deſtitute of every thing, arrive in a Pagan country: theſe foreigners

beſeech the inhabitants, by the bowels of humanity, that they would ſuccour them with the neceſſaries of life: thoſe neceſſaries are given them; habitations are granted; and they all join together, and grow up into one body of people. The Chriſtian religion, by this means, takes root in that country, and ſpreads itſelf, but does not ſuddenly grow the ſtrongeſt. While things are in this condition, peace, friendſhip, faith, and equal juſtice, are preſerved amongſt them. At length the magiſtrate becomes a Chriſtian, and by that means their party becomes the moſt power-

ful: then immediately all compacts are to be broken, all civil rights to be violated, that idolatry may be extirpated; and unleſs theſe innocent Pagans, ſtrict obſervers of the rules of equity, and of the law of nature, and no ways offending againſt the laws of the ſociety; I ſay, unleſs they will forſake their ancient religion, and embrace a new and ſtrange one, they are to be turned out of the lands and poſſeſſions of their forefathers, and perhaps deprived of life itſelf: then at laſt it appears what zeal for the church, joined with the deſire of dominion, is capable to produce;

and how eaſily the pretence of religion, and of the care of ſouls, ſerves for a cloke to covetouſneſs, rapine, and ambition.

Now, whoſoever maintains that idolatry is to be rooted out of any place by laws, puniſhments, fire, and ſword, may apply this ſtory to himſelf; for the reaſon of the thing is equal both in America and Europe; and neither Pagans there, nor any diſſenting Chriſtians here, can, with any right, be deprived of their worldly goods, by the predominating faction of a court-church; nor are any civil rights to be either changed or violated

upon account of religion in one place more than another.

'But idolatry (ſay ſome) is a 'ſin, and therefore not to be to-'lerated.' If they ſaid, it were therefore to be avoided, the inference were good. But it does not follow, that becauſe it is a ſin, it ought therefore to be puniſhed by the magiſtrate: for it does not belong unto the magiſtrate to make uſe of his ſword in puniſhing every thing, indifferently, that he takes to be a ſin againſt God. Covetouſneſs, uncharitableneſs, idleneſs, and many other things are ſins, by the conſent of all

men, which yet no man ever ſaid were to be puniſhed by the magiſtrate: the reaſon is, becauſe they are not prejudicial to other mens rights, nor do they break the public peace of ſocieties. Nay, even the ſins of lying and perjury are no where puniſhable by laws, unleſs in certain caſes, in which the real turpitude of the thing, and the offence againſt God, are not conſidered, but only the injury done unto mens neighbours, and to the commonwealth. And what if in another country, to a Mahometan or a Pagan prince, the Chriſtian religion ſeem falſe and offenſive to

God, may not the Chriſtians, for the ſame reaſon, and after the ſame manner, be extirpated there?

But it may be urged further, 'That, by the law of Moſes, ido-'laters were to be rooted out.' True indeed, by the law of Moſes, but that is not obligatory to us Chriſtians. No body pretends that every thing, generally enjoined by the law of Moſes, ought to be practiſed by Chriſtians. But there is nothing more frivolous than that common diſtinction of moral, judicial, and ceremonial law, which men ordinarily make uſe of: for no poſitive law what-

ſoever can oblige any people, but thoſe to whom it is given. 'Hear, 'O Iſrael!' ſufficiently reſtrains the obligation of the law of Moſes only to that people. And this conſideration alone is anſwer enough unto thoſe that urge the authority of the law of Moſes for the inflicting of capital puniſhments upon idolaters. But however, I will examine this argument a little more particularly.

The caſe of idolaters, in reſpect of the Jewiſh commonwealth, falls under a double conſideration. The firſt is of thoſe who, being initiated in the Moſaical rites, and

made citizens of that commonwealth, did afterwards apoſtatize from the worſhip of the God of Iſrael. Theſe were proceeded againſt as traitors and rebels, guilty of no leſs than high treaſon. For the commonwealth of the Jews, different in that from all others, was an abſolute theocracy; nor was there, or could there be, any difference between the commonwealth and the church. The laws eſtabliſhed there concerning the worſhip of one inviſible Deity, were the civil laws of that people, and a part of their political government, in which God himſelf was the legiſlator.

Now, if any one can ſhew me where there is a commonwealth at this time conſtituted upon that foundation, I will acknowledge that the eccleſiaſtical laws do there unavoidably become a part of the civil, and that the ſubjects of that government both may and ought to be kept in ſtrict conformity with that church by the civil power. But there is abſolutely no ſuch thing under the goſpel as a Chriſtian commonwealth. There are indeed many cities and kingdoms that have embraced the faith of Chriſt; but they have retained their ancient form of government, with which the law

of Chriſt hath not at all meddled. He indeed hath taught men how, by faith and good works, they may attain eternal life; but he inſtituted no commonwealth. He preſcribed unto his followers no new and peculiar form of government; nor put he the ſword into any magiſtrate's hand, with commiſſion to make uſe of it in forcing men to forſake their former religion, and receive his.

Secondly, Foreigners, and ſuch as were 'ſtrangers to the commonwealth of Iſrael,' were not compelled by force to obſerve the rites of the Moſaical law, But on

the contrary, in the very ſame place where it is ordered, that 'an 'Iſraelite that was an idolator, 'ſhould be put to death,' there it is provided, that 'ſtrangers 'ſhould not be vexed nor oppreſ-'ſed,' *Exod.* xxii. 20, 21. I confeſs that the ſeven nations that poſſeſt the land which was promiſed to the Iſraelites were utterly to be cut off: but this was not ſingly becauſe they were idolators; for, if it had been the reaſon, why were the Moabites and the other nations to be ſpared? No: the reaſon is this; God being in a peculiar manner king of the Jews, he could not ſuffer the adoration of any other

deity, (which was properly an act of high treaſon againſt himſelf) in the land of Canaan, which was his kingdom: for ſuch a manifeſt revolt could no ways conſiſt with his dominion, which was perfectly political in that country. All idolatry was therefore to be rooted out of the bounds of his kingdom, becauſe it was an acknowledgement of another God; that is to ſay, another king, againſt the laws of empire. The inhabitants were alſo to be driven out, that the entire poſſeſſion of the land might be given to the Iſraelites, *Deut.* ii. And for the like reaſon, the Emims and the Horims were

driven out of their countries by the children of Eſau and Lot, and their lands, upon the ſame grounds, given by God to the invaders: But tho' all idolatry was thus rooted out of the land of Canaan, yet every idolater was not brought to execution. The whole family of Rahab, the whole nation of the Gibeonites, articled with Joſhua, and were allowed by treaty; and there were many captives amongſt the Jews who were idolaters. David and Solomon ſubdued many countries without the confines of the land of promiſe, and carried their conqueſts as far as Euphrates. Amongſt ſo many captives taken,

ſo many nations reduced under their obedience, we find not one man forced into the Jewiſh religion, and the worſhip of the true God, and puniſhed for idolatry, though all of them were certainly guilty of it. If any one indeed, becoming a proſelyte, deſired to be made a denizen of their commonwealth, he was obliged to ſubmit unto their laws; that is, to embrace their religion: but this he did willingly, on his own accord, not by conſtraint. He did not unwillingly ſubmit to ſhew his obedience, but he ſought and ſolicited for it as a privilege; and as ſoon as he was admitted, he be-

came ſubject to the laws of the commonwealth, by which all idolatry was forbidden within the borders of the land of Canaan. But that law (as I have ſaid) did not reach to any of thoſe regions, however ſubjected unto the Jews, that were ſituated without thoſe bounds.

Thus far concerning outward worſhip. Let us now conſider articles of faith.

The articles of religion are ſome of them practical, and ſome ſpeculative. Now, though both ſorts conſiſt in the knowledge of truth,

yet theſe terminate ſimply in the underſtanding; thoſe influence the will and manners. Speculative opinions therefore, and articles of faith (as they are called) which are required only to be believed, cannot be impoſed on any church by the law of the land: for it is abſurd that things ſhould be enjoined by laws, which are not in mens power to perform. And to believe this or that to be true, does not depend upon our will. But of this enough has been ſaid already. But (will ſome ſay) let men at leaſt profeſs that they believe. A ſweet religion indeed, that obliges men to diſſemble, and

tell lies both to God and man, for the ſalvation of their ſouls! If the magiſtrate thinks to ſave men thus, he ſeems to underſtand little of the way of ſalvation: and if he does it not in order to ſave them, why is he ſo ſolicitous about the articles of faith as to enact them by a law?

Further, the magiſtrate ought not to forbid the preaching or profeſſing of any ſpeculative opinions in any church, becauſe they have no manner of relation to the civil rights of the ſubjects. If a Roman catholic believe that to be really the body of Chriſt, which

another man calls bread, he does no injury thereby to his neighbour. If a Jew do not believe the New Teſtament to be the word of God, he does not thereby alter any thing in mens civil rights. If a heathen doubt of both Teſtaments, he is is not therefore to be puniſhed as a pernicious citizen. The power of the magiſtrate, and the eſtates of the people, may be equally ſecure, whether any man believe theſe things or no. I readily grant, that theſe opinions are falſe and abſurd: but the buſineſs of laws is not to provide for the truth of opinions, but for the ſafety and ſecurity of the commonwealth, and of every

particular man's goods and perſon. And ſo it ought to be. For truth certainly would do well enough, if ſhe were once left to ſhift for herſelf. She ſeldom has received, and I fear never will receive, much aſſiſtance from the power of great men, to whom ſhe is but rarely known, and more rarely welcome. She is not taught by laws, nor has ſhe any need of force to procure her entrance into the minds of men. Errors indeed prevail by the aſſiſtance of foreign and borrowed ſuccours: but if truth makes not her way into the underſtanding by her own light, ſhe will be but the weaker for

any borrowed force violence can add to her. Thus much for ſpeculative opinions. Let us now proceed to practical ones.

A good life, in which conſiſts no the leaſt part of religion and true piety, concerns alſo the civil government; and in it lies the ſafety both of mens ſouls, and of the commonwealth. Moral actions belong therefore to the juriſdiction both of the outward and inward court, both of the civil and domeſtic governor, I mean, both of the magiſtrate and conſcience. Here therefore is great danger, leſt one of theſe juriſdic-

tions intrench upon the other, and diſcord ariſe between the keeper of the public peace, and the overſeers of ſouls. But if what has been already ſaid concerning the limits of both theſe governments be rightly conſidered, it will eaſily remove all difficulty in this matter.

Every man has an immortal ſoul, capable of eternal happineſs or miſery; whoſe happineſs depending upon his believing and doing thoſe things in this life, which are neceſſary to the obtaining of God's favour, and are preſcribed by God to that end: it

follows from thence, firſt, that the obſervance of theſe things is the higheſt obligation that lies upon mankind, and that our utmoſt care, application, and diligence, ought to be exerciſed in the ſearch and performance of them; becauſe there is nothing in this world that is of any conſideration in compariſon with eternity. Secondly, that ſeeing one man does not violate the right of another, by his erroneous opinions, and undue manner of worſhip, nor is his perdition any prejudice to another man's affairs; therefore the care of each man's ſalvation belongs only to himſelf.

But I would not have this underſtood as if I meant hereby to condemn all charitable admonitions, and affectionate endeavours to reduce men from errors, which are indeed the greateſt duty of a Chriſtian. Any one may employ as many exhortations and arguments as he pleaſes towards the promoting of another man's ſalvation; but all force and compulſion are to be forborn. Nothing is to be done imperiouſly. No body is obliged in that matter to yield obedience unto the admonitions or injunctions of another, further than he himſelf is perſuaded. Every man, in that, has the ſupreme and ab-

ſolute authority of judging for himſelf. And the reaſon is, becauſe no body elſe is concerned in it, nor can receive any prejudice from his conduct therein.

But beſides their ſouls, which are immortal, men have alſo their temporal lives here upon earth: the ſtate whereof being frail and fleeting, and the duration uncertain, they have need of ſeveral outward conveniences to the ſupport thereof; which are to be procured and preſerved by pains and induſtry. For thoſe things that are neceſſary to the comfortable ſupport of our lives, are not the

ſpontaneous products of nature, nor do offer themſelves fit and prepared for our uſe. This part therefore draws on another care, and neceſſarily gives another employment. But the pravity of mankind being ſuch, that they had rather injuriouſly prey upon the fruits of other mens labours, than take pains to provide for themſelves; the neceſſity of preſerving men in the poſſeſſion of what honeſt induſtry has already acquired, and alſo of preſerving their liberty and ſtrength, whereby they may acquire what they further want, obliges men to enter into ſociety with one another;

that by mutual aſſiſtance, and joint force, they may ſecure unto each other their properties in the things that contribute to the comfort and happineſs of this life, leaving in the mean while to every man the care of his own eternal happineſs; the attainment whereof can neither be facilitated by another man's induſtry, nor can the loſs of it turn to another man's prejudice, nor the hope of it be forced from him by any external violence: but foraſmuch as men thus entering into ſocieties, grounded upon their mutual compacts of aſſiſtance for the defence of their temporal goods, may nevertheleſs be depri-

ved of them, either by the rapine and fraud of their fellow-citizens, or by the hoſtile violence of foreigners; the remedy of this evil conſiſts in arms, riches, and multitude of citizens; the remedy of the other in laws; and the care of all things, relating both to the one and the other, is committed by the ſociety to the civil magiſtrate. This is the original, this is the uſe, and theſe are the bounds of the legiſlative (which is the ſupreme) power in every commonwealth: I mean, that proviſion may be made for the ſecurity of each man's private poſſeſſions; for the peace, riches, and public com-

modities of the whole people, and, as much as poſſible, for the increaſe of their inward ſtrength againſt foreign invaſions.

Theſe things being thus explained, it is eaſy to underſtand to what end the legiſlative power ought to be directed, and by what meaſures regulated, and that is the temporal good and outward proſperity of the ſociety, which is the ſole reaſon of mens entering into ſociety, and the only thing they ſeek and aim at in it. And it is alſo evident what liberty remains to men in reference to their eternal ſalvation,

and that is, that every one ſhould do what he in his conſcience is perſuaded to be acceptable to the Almighty, on whoſe good pleaſure and acceptance depends his eternal happineſs. For obedience is due in the firſt place to God, and afterwards to the laws.

But ſome may aſk, 'What if 'the magiſtrate ſhould enjoin any 'thing by his authority that ap-'pears unlawful to the conſcience 'of a private perſon?' I anſwer, That if government be faithfully adminiſtered, and the counſels of the magiſtrate be indeed directed to the public good, this will ſel-

dom happen. But if perhaps it do ſo fall out; I ſay, that ſuch a private perſon is to abſtain from the action that he judges unlawful, and he is to undergo the puniſhment, which it is not unlawful for him to bear. For the private judgment of any perſon concerning a law enacted in political matters for the public good, does not take away the obligation of that law, nor deſerve a diſpenſation: but if the law indeed be concerning things that lie not within the verge of the magiſtrate's authority, (as for example, that the people, or any part amongſt them, ſhould be compelled

to embrace a ſtrange religion, and join in the worſhip and ceremonies of another church) men are not in theſe caſes obliged by that law againſt their conſciences: for the political ſociety is inſtituted for no other end, but only to ſecure every man's poſſeſſion of the things of this life. The care of each man's ſoul, and of the things of heaven, which neither does belong to the commonwealth, nor can be ſubjected to it, is left entirely to every man's ſelf. Thus the ſafeguard of mens lives, and of the things that belong unto this life, is the buſineſs of the commonwealth; and the pre-

ſerving of thoſe things unto their owners is the duty of the magiſtrate: and therefore the magiſtrate cannot take away theſe worldly things from this man or party, and give them to that; nor change propriety amongſt fellow-ſubjects, (no not even by a law) for a cauſe that has no relation with the end of civil government; I mean, for their religion; which, whether it be true or falſe, does no prejudice to the worldly concerns of their fellow-ſubjects, which are the things that only belong unto the care of the commonwealth.

'But what if the magiſtrate be-
'lieve ſuch a law as this to be
'for the public good?' I anſwer, As the private judgment of any particular perſon, if erroneous, does not exempt him from the obligation of law; ſo the private judgment (as I may call it) of the magiſtrate, does not give him any new right of impoſing laws upon his ſubjects, which neither was in the conſtitution of the government granted him, nor ever was in the power of the people to grant; and leaſt of all, if he make it his buſineſs to enrich and advance his followers and fellow-ſectaries with the ſpoils

of others. 'But what if the ma-
'giſtrate believe that he has a
'right to make ſuch laws, and
'that they are for the public
'good, and his ſubjects believe
'the contrary? Who ſhall be
'judge between them?' I an-
ſwer, God alone. For there is
no judge upon earth between the
ſupreme magiſtrate and the peo-
ple. God, I ſay, is the only
judge in this caſe, who will retri-
bute unto every one at the laſt
day, according to his deſerts; that
is, according to his ſincerity and
uprightneſs, in endeavouring to
promote piety, and the public
weal and peace of mankind. 'But

'what ſhall be done in the mean 'while?' I anſwer, The principal and chief care of every one ought to be of his own ſoul firſt, and in the next place of the public peace; though yet there are very few will think it is peace there, where they ſee all laid waſte.

There are two ſorts of conteſts amongſt men, the one managed by law, the other by force; and theſe are of that nature, that where the one ends, the other always begins. But it is not my buſineſs to inquire into the power of the magiſtrate in the different conſtitutions of nations. I only know

what uſually happens where controverſies ariſe, without a judge to determine them. You will ſay then, 'The magiſtrate being the 'ſtronger, will have his will, and 'carry his point.' Without doubt. But the queſtion is not here concerning the doubtfulneſs of the event, but the rule of right.

It remains that I ſay ſomething concerning thoſe aſſemblies, which being vulgarly called, and perhaps having ſometimes been, conventicles, and nurſeries of factions and ſeditions, are thought to afford the ſtrongeſt matter of objection againſt this doctrine of toleration:

But this has not happened by any thing peculiar unto the genius of ſuch aſſemblies, but by the unhappy circumſtances of an oppreſſed or ill-ſettled liberty. Thoſe accuſations would ſoon ceaſe, if the law of toleration were once ſo ſettled, that all churches were obliged to lay down toleration as the foundation of their own liberty, and teach, that liberty of conſcience is every man's natural right, equally belonging to diſſenters as to themſelves; and that no body ought to be compelled in matters of religion, either by law or force. The eſtabliſhment of this one thing would take away

all ground of complaints and tumults upon account of conſcience. And theſe cauſes of diſcontents and animoſities being once removed, there would remain nothing in theſe aſſemblies that were not more peaceable, and leſs apt to produce diſturbance of ſtate, than in any other meetings whatſoever. But let us examine particularly the heads of theſe accuſations.

You will ſay, 'That aſſemblies 'and meetings endanger the pu-'blic peace, and threaten the com-'monwealth.' I anſwer, if this be ſo, why are there daily ſuch numerous meetings in markets and courts

of judicature? Why are crowds upon the exchange, and a concourſe of people in cities ſuffered? You will reply, theſe are civil aſſemblies; but thoſe that we object againſt are eccleſiaſtical. I anſwer, it is a likely thing indeed, that ſuch aſſemblies as are altogether remote from civil affairs, ſhould be moſt apt to embroil them. 'O! 'but civil aſſemblies are compoſed 'of men that differ from one ano- 'ther in matters of religion, but 'theſe eccleſiaſtical meetings are 'of perſons that are all of one 'opinion.' As if an agreement in matters of religion, were in effect a conſpiracy againſt the commen-

wealth; or as if men would not be ſo much the more warmly unanimous in religion, the leſs liberty they had in aſſembling. But it will be urged ſtill, 'That civil aſſemblies 'are open and free for any one to 'enter into, whereas religious con-'venticles are more private, and 'thereby give opportunity to clan-'deſtine machinations.' I anſwer, that this is not ſtrictly true, for many civil aſſemblies are not open to every one. And if ſome religious meetings be private, who are they (I beſeech you) that are to be blamed for it? thoſe that deſire, or thoſe that forbid their being public? Again, you will ſay, 'That

'religious communion does ex-
'ceedingly unite mens minds and
'affections to one another, and is
'therefore the more dangerous.'
But if this beſo, why is not the ma-
giſtrate afraid of his own church?
and why doth he not forbid their
aſſemblies as things dangerous to
his government? You will ſay,
'Becauſe he himſelf is a part,
'and even the head of them.' As
if he were not alſo a part of the
commonwealth, and the head of
the whole people.

Let us therefore deal plainly.
The magiſtrate is afraid of other
churches, but not of his own;

becauſe he is kind and favourable to the one, but ſevere and cruel to the other. Theſe he treats like children, and indulges them even to wantonneſs: thoſe he uſes as ſlaves: and how blameleſsly ſoever they demean themſelves, recompenſes them no otherwiſe than by gallies, priſons, confiſcations, and death. Theſe he cheriſhes and defends: thoſe he continually ſcourges and oppreſſes. Let him turn the tables, or let thoſe diſſenters enjoy but the ſame privileges in civils as his other ſubjects, and he will quickly find that theſe religious meetings will be no longer dangerous: for if men enter into

ſeditious conſpiracies, it is not religion that inſpires them to it in their meetings, but their ſufferings and oppreſſions that make them willing to eaſe themſelves. Juſt and moderate governments are every where quiet, every where ſafe: but oppreſſion raiſes ferments, and makes men ſtruggle to caſt of an uneaſy and tyrannical yoke. I know that ſeditions are very frequently raiſed upon pretence of religion: but it is as true, that, for religion, ſubjects are frequently ill treated, and live miſerably. Believe me, the ſtirs that are made, proceed not from any peculiar temper of this or that church or religious ſociety,

but from the common diſpoſition of all mankind, who, when they groan under any heavy burden, endeavour naturally to ſhake off the yoke that galls their necks. Suppoſe this buſineſs of religion were let alone, and that there were ſome other diſtinction made between men and men, upon account of their different complexions, ſhapes, and features; ſo that thoſe who have black hair (for example) or grey eyes, ſhould not enjoy the ſame privileges as other citizens, that they ſhould not be permitted either to buy or ſell, or live by their callings; that parents ſhould not have the government

and education of their own children; that they ſhould either be excluded from the benefit of the laws, or meet with partial judges: can it be doubted but theſe perſons, thus diſtinguiſhed from others by the colour of their hair and eyes, and united together by one common perſecution, would be as dangerous to the magiſtrate, as any others that had aſſociated themſelves merely upon the account of religion? Some enter into company for trade and profit; others, for want of buſineſs, have their clubs for claret: Neighbourhood joins ſome, and religion others. But there is one only thing which ga-

thers people into ſeditious commotions, and that is oppreſſion.

You will ſay, 'What! will you 'have people meet at divine ſer-'vice againſt the magiſtrate's will?' I anſwer, Why, I pray, againſt his will? Is it not both lawful and neceſſary that they ſhould meet? Againſt his will, do you ſay? That is what I complain of. That is the very root of all the miſchief. Why are aſſemblies leſs ſufferable in a church than in a theatre or market? Thoſe that meet there are not either more vicious, or more turbulent, than thoſe that meet elſewhere. The buſineſs in that is,

that they are ill uſed, and therefore they are not to be ſuffered. Take away the partiality that is uſed towards them in matters of common right; change the laws; take away the penalties unto which they are ſubjected, and all things will immediately become ſafe and peaceable. Nay, thoſe that are averſe to the religion of the magiſtrate, will think themſelves ſo much the more bound to maintain the peace of the commonwealth, as their condition is better in that place than elſewhere; and all the ſevéral ſeparate congregations, like ſo many guardians of the public peace, will watch one another, that

nothing may be innovated or changed in the form of the government; becauſe they can hope for nothing better than what they already enjoy, that is, an equal condition with their fellow ſubjects, under a juſt and moderate government. Now, if that church, which agrees in religion with the prince, be eſteemed the chief ſupport of any civil government, and that for no other reaſon (as has already been ſhewn) than becauſe the prince is kind, and the laws are favourable to it; how much greater will be the ſecurity of a government, where all good ſubjects, of whatſoever church they be, without

any diſtinction upon account of religion, enjoying the ſame favour with the prince, and the ſame benefit of the laws, ſhall become the common ſupport and guard of it, and where none will have any occaſion to fear the ſeverity of the laws, but thoſe that do injuries to their neighbours, and offend againſt the civil peace?

That we may draw towards a concluſion, the ſum of all we drive at is, 'That every man may enjoy 'the ſame rights that are granted 'to others.' Is it permitted to worſhip God in the Roman manner? Let it be permitted to do it in the

Geneva form alſo. Is it permitted to ſpeak Latin in the market-place? Let thoſe that have a mind to it, be permitted to do it alſo in the church. Is it lawful for any man, in his own houſe, to kneel, ſtand, ſit, or uſe any other poſture, and to clothe himſelf in white or black, in ſhort or in long garments? Let it not be made unlawful to eat bread, drink wine, or waſh with water in the church. In a word, whatſoever things are left free by law in the common occaſions of life, let them remain free unto every church in divine worſhip. Let no man's life, or body, or houſe, or eſtate, ſuffer any manner of preju-

dice upon theſe accounts. Can you allow of the Preſbyterian diſcipline? Why ſhould not the Epiſcopal alſo have what they like? Eccleſiaſtical authority, whether it be adminiſtered by the hands of a ſingle perſon, or many, is every where the ſame; and neither has any juriſdiction in things civil, nor any manner of power of compulſion, nor any thing at all to do with riches and revenues.

Eccleſiaſtical aſſemblies and ſermons are juſtified by daily experience, and public allowance: theſe are allowed to people of ſome one perſuaſion; why not to all? If any

thing paſs in a religious meeting ſeditiouſly, and contrary to the public peace, it is to be puniſhed in the ſame manner, and no otherwiſe than as if it had happened in a fair or market. Theſe meetings ought not to be ſanctuaries for factious and flagitious fellows; nor ought it to be leſs lawful for men to meet in churches than in halls; nor are one part of the ſubjects to be eſteemed more blameable for their meeting together than others. Every one is to be accountable for his own actions; and no man is to be laid under a ſuſpicion, or odium, for the fault of another. Thoſe that are ſeditious, murderers, thieves,

robbers, adulterers, ſlanderers, &c. of whatſoever church, whether national, or not, ought to be puniſhed and ſuppreſs'd: but thoſe whoſe doctrine is peaceable, and whoſe manners are pure and blameleſs, ought to be upon equal terms with their fellow-ſubjects. Thus if ſolemn aſſemblies, obſervations of feſtivals, public worſhip, be permitted to any one ſort of profeſſors, all theſe things ought to be permitted to the Preſbyterians, Independents, Anabaptiſts, Arminians, Quakers, and others, with the ſame liberty. Nay, if we may openly ſpeak the truth, and as becomes one man to another, neither Pagan, nor Maho-

metan, nor Jew, ought to be excluded from the civil rights of the commonwealth, becauſe of his religion. The goſpel commands no ſuch thing. The church, which 'judges not thoſe that are without,' (1 *Cor.* v. 12, 13.) wants it not. And the commonwealth, which embraces indifferently all men that are honeſt, peaceable, and induſtrious, requires it not. Shall we ſuffer a Pagan to deal and trade with us, and ſhall we not ſuffer him to pray unto and worſhip God? If we allow the Jews to have private houſes and dwellings amongſt us, why ſhould we not allow them to have ſynagogues? Is their doctrine

more falſe, their worſhip more abominable, or is the civil peace more endangered, by their meeting in public, than in their private houſes? But if theſe things may be granted to Jews and Pagans, ſurely the condition of any Chriſtians ought not to be worſe than theirs in a Chriſtian commonwealth.

You will ſay, perhaps, 'Yes, it 'ought to be; becauſe they are 'more inclinable to factions, tu-'mults, and civil wars.' I anſwer, Is this the fault of the Chriſtian religion? If it be ſo, truly the Chriſtian religion is the worſt of all religions, and ought neither to be

embraced by any particular perſon, nor tolerated by any common-wealth. For if this be the genius, this the nature of the Chriſtian religion, to be turbulent and deſtructive to the civil peace, that church itſelf which the magiſtrate indulges will not always be innocent. But far be it from us to ſay any ſuch thing of that religion which carries the greateſt oppoſition to covetouſneſs, diſcord, ambition, contention, and all manner of inordinate deſires, and is the moſt modeſt and peaceable religion that ever was. We muſt therefore ſeek another cauſe of thoſe evils that are charged upon religion: and if we

conſider right, we ſhall find it to conſiſt wholly in the ſubject that I am treating of. It is not the diverſity of opinions, (which cannot be avoided) but the refuſal of toleration to thoſe that are of different opinions (which might have been granted) that has produced all the buſtles and wars that have been in the Chriſtian world upon account of religion. The heads and leaders of the church, moved by avarice and inſatiable deſire of dominion, making uſe of the immoderate ambition of magiſtrates, and the credulous ſuperſtition of the giddy multitude, have incenſed and animated them againſt thoſe that diſ-

ſent from themſelves, by preaching unto them contrary to the laws of the goſpel, and to the precepts of charity, that ſchiſmatics and heretics are to be rooted out of their poſſeſſions, and deſtroyed. And thus have they mixed together, and confounded two things that are in themſelves moſt different, the church and the common-wealth. Now, as it is very difficult for men patiently to ſuffer themſelves to be ſtript of the goods which they have got by their honeſt induſtry, and contrary to all the laws of equity, both human and divine, to be delivercd up for a prey to other mens violence and

rapine, eſpecially when they are otherwiſe altogether blameleſs, and that the occaſion for which they are thus treated does not at all belong to the juriſdiction of the magiſtrate, but entirely to the conſcience of every particular man, for the conduct of which he is accountable to God only: What elſe can be expected, but that theſe men, growing weary of the evils under which they labour, ſhould in the end think it lawful for them to reſiſt force with force, and to defend their natural rights (which are not forfeitable upon account of religion) with arms, as well as they can? That this has been hitherto

the ordinary courſe of things, is abundantly evident in hiſtory: and that it will continue to be ſo hereafter, is but too apparent in reaſon. It cannot indeed be otherwiſe, ſo long as the principle of perſecution for religion ſhall prevail, as it has done hitherto with magiſtrate and people, and ſo long as thoſe, that ought to be the preachers of peace and concord, ſhall continue, with all their art and ſtrength, to excite men to arms, and ſound the trumpet of war. But that magiſtrates ſhould thus ſuffer theſe incendiaries, and diſturbers of the public peace, might juſtly be wondered at, if it did not appear that they

have been invited by them unto a participation of the ſpoil; and have therefore thought fit to make uſe of their covetouſneſs and pride, as means whereby to increaſe their own power. For who does not ſee, that theſe good men are indeed more miniſters of the goverment, than miniſters of the goſpel; and that, by flattering the ambition, and favouring the dominion of princes and men in authority, they endeavour with all their might to promote that tyranny in the commonwealth, which otherwiſe they ſhould not be able to eſtabliſh in the church? This is the unhappy agreement that we ſee between the

church and ſtate. Whereas if each of them would contain itſelf within its own bounds, the one attending to the worldly welfare of the commonwealth, the other to the ſalvation of ſouls, it is impoſſible that any diſcord ſhould ever have happened between them. *Sed, pudet hæc opprobria*, &c. God almighty grant, I beſeech him, that the goſpel of peace may at length be preached; and that civil magiſtrates, growing more careful to conform their own conſciences to the law of God, and leſs ſolicitous about the binding of other mens conſciences by human laws, may, like fathers of their country, direct

all their counſels and endeavours to promote univerſally the civil welfare of all their children, except only of ſuch as are arrogant, ungovernable, and injurious to their brethren; and that all eccleſiaſtical men, who boaſt themſelves to be the ſucceſſors of the apoſtles, walking peaceably and modeſtly in the apoſtles ſteps, without intermeddling with ſtate-affairs, may apply themſelves wholly to promote the ſalvation of ſouls.

FAREWEL.

POSTSCRIPT.

PERHAPS it may not be amiſs to add a few things concerning hereſy and ſchiſm. A Turk is not, nor can be, either heretic or ſchiſmatic to a Chriſtian: and if any man fall off from the Chriſtian faith to Mahometaniſm, he does not thereby become a heretic or ſchiſmatic, but an apoſtate, and an infidel. This no body doubts of. And by this it appears, that men of different religions cannot be heretics or ſchiſmatics to one another.

We are to enquire therefore, what men are of the ſame religion? Concerning which, it is manifeſt, that thoſe who have one and the ſame rule of faith and worſhip, are of the ſame religion; and thoſe who have not the ſame rule of faith and worſhip, are of different religions: for ſince all things that belong unto that religion are contained in that rule, it follows neceſſarily, that thoſe who agree in one rule are of one and the ſame religion; and *vice verſa*, Thus Turks and Chriſtians are of different religions, becauſe theſe take the holy ſcriptures to be the rule of their

religion, and thoſe the Koran: and for the ſame reaſon there may be different religions alſo even amongſt Chriſtians. The Papiſts and the Lutherans, though both of them profeſs faith in Chriſt, and are therefore called Chriſtians, yet are not both of the ſame religion; becauſe theſe acknowledge nothing but the holy ſcriptures to be the rule and foundation of their religion; thoſe take in alſo rules and decrees of Popes, and of all theſe together make the rule of their religion. And thus the Chriſtians of St. John (as they are called) and the Chriſtians of Geneva, are of different religions;

becauſe theſe alſo take only the ſcriptures, and thoſe, I know not what traditions for the rule of their religion.

This being ſettled, it follows, Firſt, that hereſy is a ſeparation made in eccleſiaſtical communion between men of the ſame religion, for ſome opinions no way contained in the rule itſelf. And, ſecondly, that amongſt theſe who acknowledge nothing but the holy ſcriptures to be their rule of faith, hereſy is a ſeparation made in their Chriſtian communion, for opinions not contained in the expreſs words of ſcripture. Now,

this ſeparation may be made in a twofold manner.

1. When the greater part, or (by the magiſtrate's patronage) the ſtronger part of the church ſeparates itſelf from others, by excluding them out of her communion, becauſe they will not profeſs their belief of certain opinions which are not to be found in the expreſs words of ſcripture. For it is not the paucity of thoſe that are ſeparated, nor the authority of the magiſtrate, that can make any man guilty of hereſy: but he only is an heretic who divides the church into parts, intro-

duces names and marks of diſtinction, and voluntarily makes a ſeparation becauſe of ſuch opinions.

2. When any one ſeparates himſelf from the communion of a church, becauſe that church does not publickly profeſs ſome certain opinions which the holy ſcriptures do not expreſsly teach.

Both theſe are heretics, 'becauſe they err in fundamentals, 'and they err obſtinately againſt 'knowledge:' for when they have determined the holy ſcriptures to be the only foundation of faith,

they nevertheleſs lay down certain propoſitions as fundamental, which are not in the ſcripture; and becauſe others will not acknowledge theſe additional opinions of theirs, nor build upon them as if they were neceſſary and fundamental, they therefore make a ſeparation in the church, either by withdrawing themſelves from the others, or expelling the others from them. Nor does it ſignify any thing for them to ſay, that their confeſſions and ſymbols are agreeable to ſcripture, and to the analogy of faith; for if they be conceived in the expreſs words of ſcripture, there can be no que-

ſtion about them, becauſe thoſe are acknowledged by all Chriſtians to be of divine inſpiration, and therefore fundamental. But if they ſay, 'That the articles which 'they require to be profeſſed are 'conſequences deduced from the 'ſcripture:' It is undoubtedly well done of them to believe and profeſs ſuch things as ſeem unto them ſo agreeable to the rule of faith; but it would be very ill done to obtrude thoſe things upon others, unto whom they do not ſeem to be the indubitable doctrines of the ſcripture; and to make a ſeparation for ſuch things as theſe, which neither

are nor can be fundamental, is to become heretics. For I do not think there is any man arrived to that degree of madneſs, as that he dare give out his conſequences and interpretations of ſcripture as divine inſpirations, and compare the articles of faith that he has framed according to his own fancy with the authority of the ſcripture. I know there are ſome propoſitions ſo evidently agreeable to ſcripture, that no body can deny them to be drawn from thence; but about thoſe, therefore, there can be no difference. This only I ſay, that however clearly we may think this or the other doc-

trine to be deduced from ſcripture, we ought not therefore to impoſe it upon others as a neceſſary article of faith, becauſe we believe it to be agreeable to the rule of faith; unleſs we would be content alſo that other doctrines ſhould be impoſed upon us in the ſame manner, and that we ſhould be compelled to receive and profeſs all the different and contradictory opinions of Lutherans, Calviniſts, Remonſtrants, Anabaptiſts, and other ſects, which the contrivers of ſymbols, ſyſtems, and confeſſions are accuſtomed to deliver unto their followers as genuine and neceſſary deductions

from the holy ſcripture. I cannot but wonder at the extravagant arrogance of thoſe men, who think that they themſelves can explain things neceſſary to ſalvation more clearly than the Holy Ghoſt, the eternal and infinite wiſdom of God.

Thus much concerning hereſy; which word, in common uſe, is applied only to the doctrinal part of religion. Let us now conſider ſchiſm, which is a crime near akin to it: for both thoſe words ſeem unto me to ſignify 'an ill-'grounded ſeparation in eccleſi-'aſtical communion, made about 'things not neceſſary.' But ſince

uſe, which is the ſupreme law in matter of language, has determined that hereſy relates to errors in faith, and ſchiſm to thoſe in worſhip or diſcipline, we muſt conſider them under that diſtinction.

Schiſm then, for the ſame reaſons that have already been alledged, is nothing elſe but a ſeparation made in the communion of the church, upon account of ſomething in divine worſhip, or eccleſiaſtical diſcipline, that is not any neceſſary part of it. Now, nothing in worſhip or diſcipline can be neceſſary to Chriſtian

communion, but what Chriſt our legiſlator, or the apoſtles, by inſpiration of the Holy Spirit, have commanded in expreſs words.

In a word, he that denies not any thing that the holy ſcriptures teach in expreſs words, nor makes a ſeparation upon occaſion of any thing that is not manifeſtly contained in the ſacred text; however he may be nick-named by any ſect of Chriſtians, and declared by ſome, or all of them, to be utterly void of true Chriſtianity; yet indeed and in truth this man cannot be either a heretic or ſchiſmatic.

Theſe things might have been explained more largely and advantageouſly; but it is enough to have hinted at them thus briefly to a perſon of your parts.

THE END.